MARCH, 1951
Vol. 6 No. 3
New South

All material presented in NEW SOUTH *may be used freely by other publications. A credit line will be appreciated.*

The Taproots of Equality

By Cecil D. Halliburton

THERE is a vast amount of interracial good will in the South. This nearly every Southerner, white and Negro, knows. It is not always recognized as a fact outside the South, and this sometimes exasperates Southerners, especially white Southerners.

This ignorance about the South outside the South is understandable, however, and should be met with charity. It grows partly out of the fact that a great deal of this good will between the races is on a person-to-person basis, expressing itself in patterns which one sociologist calls *common human* relationships — mutual aid, understanding, and friendship between individuals, day-to-day kindnesses, the kind of things that are not likely to be publicized.

A great deal of this good will, being on a personal basis, is unorganized and therefore has failed to make itself felt in *inter-group* relationships, as distinguished from person-to-person relationships. It seems to me that one of the great functions of an organization like the Southern Regional Council and its predecessors is to organize and implement this vast resource of good will to make it effective in attacking those *group* patterns which make for injustice, unfairness, and intolerance in the relations between the races.

Other Techniques

I do not for a minute hold that the progress of the Negro toward the entirely legitimate goal of full and first class national, state and community citizenship is to be pursued only by the path of organized good will as made possible by such organizations as this. The tremendous strides toward full citizenship made possible in the past ten or fifteen years as the result of Federal court decisions demonstrate clearly that other techniques bear fruit.

But in the last analysis the full enjoyment of gains made and the acceleration of the march toward first class citizenship for all depend on the *general acceptance* of newer patterns based on justice, fair play, and tolerance, made possible by the enlightenment of minds and consciences, and leavened by the American concept of

---

Mr. Halliburton is President of Voorhees School and Junior College, Denmark, S. C. This article is drawn from an address presented in Charleston in observance of Race Relations Sunday.

Democracy and the Christian concept of Brotherhood.

So there will for a long time be an important place for interracial groups, on local, state and regional levels. Courts and legislative bodies can facilitate, supplement, and often even stimulate such work as can be done by the Southern Regional Council and other voluntary agencies; they can never substitute for them.

It has occurred to me that it might be of interest today to note some of the changes for the better which have taken place in the South and the Nation within the past two or three decades — changes which from the point of view of one of my color, and doubtless from the point of view of any sane and reasonably thoughtful person, are of great significance.

Decline of Racism

First is the rapid decline in the popularity of the theory that the Negro is inherently and unalterably the intellectual and moral, if not the physical, inferior of the Caucasian. This idea not so long ago was openly and unquestioningly accepted as gospel by the vast majority of white people and more or less tacitly by no small number of Negroes themselves. It was not confined to the ignorant nor to the unusually prejudiced.

But today this aspect of racism is hardly respectable among the intelligent, and is viewed with suspicion and misgiving, even among the unlearned. The findings of many branches of science have refuted the theory, and the man in the street has seen so many exceptions to what used to be regarded as the rule that common sense tells him the theory could not be true.

This change of opinion has been a fundamental and basic factor in all the other improvements that have taken place in recent times in attitudes and practices regarding the Negro. It is said that the great South Carolinian, John C. Calhoun, once remarked, "Show me a Negro who can parse a Greek verb," the implication being that if there were Negroes who could learn to perform this intellectual feat he would revise his opinion of the race and its potentialities. Today, no one in this country, except a few theological students and professors and a handful of scholars, parses Greek verbs; but it has been amply demonstrated that the color of the skin is in itself no bar to the possession or acquisition of any type of knowledge or skill.

Once this is recognized and accepted the American sense of fair play goes into operation. The principle of equality of opportunity begins to function as soon as it becomes evident that withholding of opportunity is unjustified by the facts. So no voice is raised today against Jackie Robinson or Marian Anderson or Ralph Bunche as they exercise their talents and perform superbly for the benefit of all.

Another idea that is rapidly losing ground is the belief that Negroes are not due equality in public facilities because they do not share the tax burden directly in proportion to their numbers. . . .

Today the South is more and more accepting the principle of the division of separate public facilities and public funds on the basis of need, population ratio, or some other equitable consideration. No South Carolinian has forgotten Governor Byrnes' statement made in his inaugural address to the

effect that it is the duty of South Carolina "to provide for the races substantial equality in school facilities," and his assertion that "we should do it because it is right. . . . "

In his last annual message to the General Assembly, then Governor Thurmond pointed out: "In past years, because of the South's poverty, the Negro as a taxpayer has been able to contribute little to the public service on which his progress depends. Today, he is finding everywhere in the South new opportunities which will enable him to carry his share of the burden."

It is significant, first, that Mr. Thurmond referred to the *South's* poverty, not the Negro's, recognizing the problem for what it is, primarily a regional rather than a racial one. Secondly, he does not argue that public services for Negroes should be in proportion to their tax contributions; his point is that more tax money can be expected from Negroes only as their opportunity to earn larger incomes is increased.

Individual Dignity

A third change that has taken place gradually and often with little recognition of what was going on is a sound growth in the tendency not to withhold from a Negro because he is a Negro the respect and consideration due all in ordinary human intercourse. That principle which is a fundamental tenet of both Christianity and Democracy, the inherent dignity of the human personality, regardless of race, national origin, religion or economic status, is gaining more and more acceptance in the South as well as elsewhere. . . .

There have always been those who have perceived, subscribed to, and operated on the principle of the fundamental dignity and the infinite worth of the individual. Peter said, after the revelation of the great verity: "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Thomas Jefferson expressed almost exactly the same idea in his immortal words: "All men are created equal."

Leaders in our churches, leaders in public life, and more and more plain citizens, influenced by this leadership and their own thought and prayer, are refusing to make invidious and unwarranted distinctions in their ordinary intercourse with fellow human beings.

Examples of Progress

Some concrete evidences of these changes are the growing use of the common titles of courtesy; the more uniform treatment of all patrons by employees of commercial establishments, and by railways in stations and on trains; the lessening opposition to the use of the ballot by qualified Negroes; the gradual trend toward the inclusion of Negro citizens in a growing variety of public services and community projects both as employees and on the policy-making level; and above all, though possibly less tangible, the increasing discomfort of an ever-enlarging number of churches and individual Christians over the gap between Christian teaching and actual practice in inter-group relations.

Having taken a brief look at some of the evidences of progress in interracial relations during the past two or three decades, let us look toward the future. There is a tremendous lot still

to be accomplished, for the goals are two, and they are far in the future: (1) complete equality of citizenship, without regard to race; (2) complete acceptance of the individual, on his merits as an individual.

Equality of Citizenship

Concerning the first goal, equality of citizenship, I have in mind the broadest definition of citizenship — that is, participation in every phase of the public life of the community — political, economic, civic, religious. Please note that I say the *public* life of the community. To me one of the fundamental principles of democracy and freedom is that a man's private life is his own. He has the right to select his own friends and associates. He has a right to privacy. He even has, I hold, the right to his prejudices, as long as he does not by himself, or joining with others, seek to project those prejudices into action which interferes with the *rights* of others.

I cannot and have no right to demand that anyone like me, or wish to associate with me, or even tolerate my presence. I should have the right, however, to enjoy *my* rights without let or hindrance. And what are those rights? The basic rights enjoyed by other men in the society who have done nothing as individuals to forfeit those basic rights. Equal opportunity in every respect; equality before the law; equality of participation in civic rights, duties and responsibilities; equality of privileges and immunities. There is no tenable basis for denying to individuals of any racial, nationality or religious group or class these equalities, and working toward the legitimate goal of these equalities is the concern of an ever-increasing number of men and women of good will, in the South as well as elsewhere. It is peculiarly and pre-eminently the business of the Southern Regional Council and its component interracial groups throughout the South.

Abstractly this objective of complete equality of citizenship and opportunity might appear to be one which would meet no opposition, but that, sadly, is not the case, as we all know. There are those who not only do not accept it themselves as a legitimate and desirable objective, but who deny that others should adopt it.

Acceptance on Merit

The second goal is intimately related to the first. Complete acceptance of the individual on his merits as an individual is a more abstract proposition. It has to do more with attitudes than with behavior. Here the law can accomplish practically nothing. What is called for is a mental and spiritual *conversion* to the principles of true Democracy and true Christianity. It involves the elimination of prejudice itself. Approach to this goal is pre-eminently the task of education; one might say it calls for evangelism. But it is also true that the process of education is in operation. The leaven is working. The grain of mustard seed is not dead.

Men of good will, of all races and creeds, working together, in and out of season, with faith and with courage, with wisdom, patience, and zeal, with charity and good humor and tact, and above all, with fervent dedication to the principles of truth and justice and brotherhood, can make this South a better South for all its people; can make this nation a better nation; can make this world a better world. The time is always ripe for such effort.

Justice and Opportunity

By Colgate W. Darden, Jr.

NO WORTHWHILE appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of the strengths and the weaknesses of the economy of the southern states can fail to take into account the relationship of the two races that occupy this fertile area, which is at once so fortunate in climate and natural resources. Progress in the Southern states, as it is elsewhere, is inextricably bound up with the even-handed administration of justice and the broadening and increasing opportunities for all men to share fairly in the enjoyment of the wealth produced by their labor.

The most potentially disruptive force with which we are presently called upon to deal is that arising out of the controversy over the segregation of the races. . . .

Our greatest danger lies in refusing to recognize the necessity for an earnest and sympathetic effort on the part of both races to deal with this grave problem of which we are the unwilling and unhappy heirs. I have little confidence in the easy optimism of those who fail to understand the depth and force of the powerful currents which are underrunning our times. Nor am I encouraged by their failure to comprehend that both races have rights and sensibilities which must be taken into account if we are not to fall victim to immeasurable woes.

Overthrow of Reason

When I reflect upon the dangerous situation which is now unfolding in South Africa where, after bloody riots involving not two but three racial groups, oppressive and harsh laws were enacted by a dominant white minority who are now enforcing them against sullen and resentful colored peoples; when I remember the almost unbelievable ferocity and reckless slaughter which attended the Spanish Civil War in the mid-thirties just passed; when I think of the brutal killings which claimed the lives of over three million helpless and innocent human beings in the partition of India but three years ago, where other millions who escaped death now wander forlornly, stripped of their earthly possessions, in search of food and shelter in the cities and villages of India and Pakistan; and when I consider that their only offense was that they happened to be Hindus among Moslems or Moslems among Hindus when the fateful day came, then I know that, where questions are to be resolved which are heavily charged with emotion, as are those involving race and religion, too much care cannot

---

Mr. Darden is President of the University of Virginia and former Governor of Virginia. This is a portion of his address to the Southern Governors' Conference of November 28, 1950. While there may be disagreement with specific points in Mr. Darden's proposal, his sane, constructive approach commends itself to all thoughtful persons.

be exercised to prevent the overthrow of reason by unbridled and senseless passion.

Moreover, it is my deep conviction that such questions cannot be resolved permanently by government fiat. The ultimate settlement lies in the hearts and minds of men and women of the races concerned whose sense of history and of justice is such as to bring them together in a common program that is at once equitable and acceptable.

School Segregation

I am constrained to make these observations by recent happenings in Virginia and other Southern states. As you know, within the past year Negro students have been admitted to the graduate and professional schools of many of the Southern universities as a result of the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *Sweatt v. Painter*.

In October, the fifteenth annual State Convention of the Association for the Advancement of Colored People was held in Lynchburg, Virginia. The dominating theme of the convention, as reported in the press, was the abolition of segregation not only in the institutions of higher learning but in the public school system as well. It is in the settlement of this issue that we shall require wholesome and constructive action by the leaders of both races.

It is not difficult for me to understand the deep desire of the Negro people to break down segregation in the public school system, although I do not share their views as to the desirability or the results of such action. The Negro believes that only by having his children gain access to schools maintained for white children is he going to be able to secure for them the opportunities for an education to which he believes them to be entitled and to which the basic law of the several states says that they are entitled. The Negro does not believe in equal but separate facilities because, while he has seen them remain separate, he has not, except in the most unusual situations, witnessed equality. He does not believe in segregation from which discrimination is lacking because he has rarely experienced it. In countless instances he has seen the segregation laws used as the shield of humiliation, exploitation, and oppression. It is not difficult to understand his aversion to them.

It is true that there are in Virginia, as I am sure there are in other Southern states, a limited number of public schools for Negroes that are the equal of any and the superior of most white schools in the state. The best appointed school in Virginia is the consolidated high school for Negroes now nearing completion in Charlottesville. But these are few and far between, and a Herculean task lies before us in Virginia and elsewhere if we are to equalize the opportunities for the two races in public education.

Two-Part Solution

Yet, this is what must be done and, in my opinion, it should be done upon a segregated basis throughout the public school system. The graduate and professional schools should be opened to both races. The regional schools, on which a great deal of work has been done in recent years, should fall in the same category since most of this specialized work will be done in connection with the graduate and professional schools of the Southern universities and colleges. They should

be opened to both Negroes and whites.

The Negro colleges in the South should be encouraged and greatly expanded. Even in those instances where advanced work is given which duplicates work being done in the white institutions, it should be vigorously developed. If the facilities be equal, it is my belief that most Negro students would elect to attend institutions controlled and directed by members of their own race.

Southern Opinion

The Southern people are overwhelmingly opposed, in my opinion, to mixed public schools. This is borne out by the Roper Survey recently published in *Life* magazine. When asked if white and Negro children should be allowed to go to the same schools together everywhere in the country, only 17.1 per cent of those questioned in the South expressed themselves as favoring such a move. This is not difficult to understand. People feel quite differently about young children, and they are not willing to make the concessions as to their education that they are willing to make in the cases of those who are more mature. To undertake to set up mixed public schools in the face of this sentiment would be to open up a festering wound that would sap our strength and destroy that unity without which there is no hope for substantial progress for either race in the South.

It is my suggestion that, in the task of building a first-rate public school system for both races, the direction of the program be placed in the hands of competent men and women drawn from both races. Representatives of both races should be placed on the school boards charged with the development of such a program. Commissions or other official boards having to do with the construction of schools should be composed of representative white and Negro citizens. Just as should boards having to do with the public health services and hospitals, which are of great concern to both races.

I am not unmindful of the fact that these suggestions will arouse antagonism among those to whom all segregation is anathema and among those to whom any concession to the Negro race is regarded as both silly and reprehensible. But I would remind these individuals that they are dealing with stubborn facts, not shadowy theories, and that a frightful price can be paid for intransigence.

'Moderation and Courage'

There are times when men exhaust their energies and dissipate their strength in barren strife and seriously impede or stop altogether the march of human progress by their stubborn insistence upon the status quo. There are times when men, by their intemperate zeal to change quickly deep-rooted habits and ancient customs, precipitate passionate reactions which plunge whole societies headlong into turmoil and violence. Both groups come to find to their bitter sorrow that gains which have been painfully achieved over many years have been swept away altogether and that good-will, patience, and understanding have been replaced by a deep-seated uneasiness, born of suspicion and mistrust, which makes a stable and happy society impossible. Intelligent moderation and courageous action will permit us to escape such times in the Southern states.

G. D. Rogers, Sr.

THE death of Mr. G. D. Rogers of Tampa, Florida, is a loss that will be felt with particular keenness by members of the Southern Regional Council.

Mr. Rogers was a valuable and devoted supporter of the Council and its objectives. He served on its Board from the beginning, and, up to the time of his death, played an active part in the Florida Division.

Born in Upson County, Georgia, in 1885, Mr. Rogers made his home early in life in Bradenton, Florida. From the most modest beginnings, he built an impressive career. His early occupations included those of farmer, tailor, drayman, mail carrier, real estate broker, and insurance agent. In 1924, he established the Fraternity Funeral Home of Bradenton, and in 1933 he became president of the Central Life Insurance Company of Tampa—today one of the principal enterprises of its kind in the nation.

But those and a host of other successful business ventures were by no means the most significant measure of Mr. Rogers' stature. He gave easily as much time, energy, and devotion to the advancement of the common welfare. His contribution to the civic life of his city and his state, the region and the nation, was enormous. He left behind him scores of landmarks in the form of material improvements, not only for persons of his race, but for all.

Most important — and most difficult to express — were his rare personal qualities. Neither his business success nor his position of civic leadership influenced in the slightest his even-handed courtesy. His kindness and his welcome went as readily to the humble as to the great. His faith in good will and mutual understanding — not as mere ideals but as a way of life — found everyday expression across all lines of race or creed or economic status.

What G. D. Rogers, Sr., brought to the Southern Regional Council are among its greatest assets — warmth of feeling, deep belief in the basic goodness of people, and the clear vision of a South united in friendship and equality.

NEW SOUTH

Published by
SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL
63 Auburn Avenue, N. E.
Atlanta 3, Georgia

Paul D. Williams.....*President*
Guy B. Johnson.....*Vice-President*
Carter Wesley.....*Vice-President*
Harold L. Trigg.....*Vice-President*
John H. Wheeler.....*Vice-President*
Charles S. Johnson....*Chmn. Exec. Com.*
George S. Mitchell....*Executive Director*
Mrs. Norma Huff.....*Sec.-Treas.*
Harold C. Fleming....*Dir. of Information*

Subscription rate.....$1.50 a year

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, MARCH, 1951

To attain through research and action programs the ideals and practices of equal opportunity for all peoples in the region.